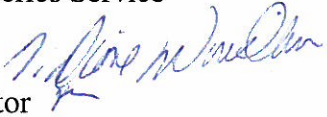




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Southwest Region  
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200  
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

SEP 29 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR: James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.  
Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
National Marine Fisheries Service

FROM: Rodney R. McInnis   
Regional Administrator  
Southwest Region  
National Marine Fisheries Service

SUBJECT: Decision Memorandum: Notice of Availability for the Public  
Draft Recovery Plan for Central California Coast coho salmon

## BACKGROUND

The attached Public Draft Recovery Plan for Central California Coast coho salmon, (Draft Recovery Plan) is the product of a multi-year process between NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Santa Rosa Area Office staff, the Northern California - Central California Coast (NCCC) Technical Recovery Team (TRT), and other collaborators. The Draft Recovery Plan utilizes the best available information on species distribution and abundance, current habitat conditions and future threats, viability criteria, and actions needed to recover CCC coho salmon. We have concluded that the Draft Recovery Plan meet the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as amended (16 D.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). The draft Federal Register Notice of Availability (NOA) announces the Public Draft Recovery Plan and associated public meetings. We would appreciate expeditious processing of this action to allow for public review time prior to public meetings. For your convenience we have posted the Draft Recovery Plan and the draft NOA electronically at:

[ftp.afsc.noaa.gov/SWR/Public/Public draft recovery plan CCC coho salmon/](ftp.afsc.noaa.gov/SWR/Public/Public%20draft%20recovery%20plan%20CCC%20coho%20salmon/)

The Recovery Plan, associated documents, and information on public meetings will also be made available via the Southwest Region Recovery website:

<http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/recovery/>

NMFS is responsible for developing and implementing ESA recovery plans for listed salmon and steelhead. In so doing, NMFS' goal is to restore endangered and threatened Pacific salmonids to the point where they are again self-sustaining in their ecosystem and no longer need the



protection of the ESA. The ESA requires that recovery plans incorporate: (1) objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination that the species is no longer threatened or endangered; (2) site-specific management actions necessary to achieve the plan's goals; and (3) estimates of the time required and costs to implement recovery actions. The ESA requires the development of recovery plans for each listed species when such a plan would promote its recovery.

Achieving recovery of CCC coho salmon will require a number of coordinated and collaborative efforts, which include: (1) implementation of the strategic restoration and threat abatement recovery actions identified in the Draft Recovery Plan; (2) monitoring of the population and habitat responses to recovery actions; and (3) further research efforts to improve our understanding of the species responses to climate change and other threats. Effective implementation of recovery actions will require: (1) extensive public outreach (including the general public, non-governmental agencies, and local, regional, State, and Federal governmental agencies) regarding the role and value of the species within the broader watershed-scale context; and (2) development of cooperative agreements between private land owners, special districts, Federally recognized tribes, and local governments with direct control and responsibilities over non-federal land-use practices. In addition, the recovery actions also require NMFS participation in land use and water planning, and regulatory processes of local, counties (in particular Mendocino, Sonoma, Marin, and Santa Cruz Counties), regional, State, and Federal agencies. NMFS will collaborate and coordinate with other resource agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the California Board of Forestry, and partner with Federal agencies, including the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Public Draft Recovery Plan provides a strategic approach for ensuring the persistence of existing populations while evaluating the potential to reintroduce populations to currently unoccupied historic habitats in the NCCC domain. The Recovery Plan incorporates the concepts of viability at the population, Diversity Strata, and ESU levels, and then identifies threats and recovery actions for specific population groups and watersheds. The Recovery Plan is intended to serve as a guide to prioritize and integrate recovery actions that contribute to improving poor current conditions, and reducing future threats to CCC coho salmon. NMFS has identified Core Areas to prevent extinction of the CCC coho, and developed Phase I and Phase II areas for expansion and ultimate recovery of the species. In particular, the Draft Recovery Plan focuses on increasing survival in Core Areas where CCC coho are known to persist.

Complex and inter-related physical, biological, and socio-economic issues must be addressed in order to recover CCC coho salmon. Policy initiatives at the Federal, State and local levels will likely be necessary to implement many of the recovery actions identified in this proposed recovery plan. Without substantial progress in habitat restoration, fish passage, and changes in water management recovery will be difficult, if not impossible.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above information, I recommend that you concur with our finding that the Public Draft Recovery Plan for Central California Coast coho salmon meet the requirements of the ESA, and transmit the attached notice to the Office of the Federal Register to announce the availability of the Proposed Plan for a 60 day public comment period.

I concur:

Date:

I do not concur:

Date:

Attachments (2): 1. Public Draft Recovery Plan for Central California Coast coho salmon  
2. Notice of Availability for publication in the Federal Register  
[ftp.afsc.noaa.gov/SWR/Public/Public draft recovery plan CCC coho salmon/](ftp.afsc.noaa.gov/SWR/Public/Public%20draft%20recovery%20plan%20CCC%20coho%20salmon/)

cc: *FIPR* Jim Lecky, Susan Pultz